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As we continue our worship this morning, turn with me to the book of Proverbs. This first Sunday of the new calendar year, we've already sung about the mercy of God, the grace of God that has sustained in every generation and in every age, and will, through His truth and through His love for us, continue to support us every day of the remainder of this earthly life and into eternity. The purpose of the Proverbs is given in Proverbs chapter 1, and we're going to have two selections from Proverbs this morning.

In Proverbs chapter 1, the book is titled or labeled the Proverbs of Solomon, the son of David, king of Israel. And it's not an accident that Solomon is identified in this way. We know that there is a greater son of David who also goes by this name.

Son of David is one of the appellations or one of the many titles, in this case a royal title, of the Lord Jesus Christ. And it is a reminder to us, and it's a link between this wisdom that is given to Solomon by God at His request, and it forms a part of the Word of God, which is the mind of Christ. And this wisdom is not only given by Solomon, but it is, in fact, the wisdom of God.

It was given by God to Solomon and was a large part of the thinking of the Lord Jesus Christ. And, of course, we know that He is our example, and He lived the life that in His humanity that we are to live before God. So to be instructed in these things, to have them as a part of our thinking, is the means of receiving the grace and the mercy of God as believers.

How are we sustained? How are we guided? How are we motivated to fulfill our calling in this life? It's by the power of God circulating in our souls. Where does the power of God come from? It comes through the Word of God and the Spirit of God. It always reminds me of the two tubes that you get when you buy a package of epoxy.

You have the resin and you have the hardener. And either one of those, especially the old style, they make it a little different way now, but years ago when you would buy epoxy, if you opened up that tube of resin and smelled it, it smelled just terrible. And if you squirted it out onto a piece of paper or something, left alone, it's not effective.

It doesn't glue anything. It's just kind of a smelly, gooey stuff. But when you mix equal parts, and they have to be equal, equal parts of the resin and the hardener in a package of epoxy, those two together form some of the strongest bonding glue known to man.

And in the same way, the Spirit of God and the Word of God are the two means by which the power of God comes into our lives. Those who pursue only the Holy Spirit, as is the case in some segments of Christianity today, without pursuing an understanding of the Word of God, are only looking at half of the picture. And indeed, it's going to be very difficult for the Holy Spirit to do His work in that environment because the Holy Spirit

doesn't speak from Himself.

Jesus said over in John 15, 16, and 17, that when the Spirit comes, He is not going to speak from Himself. He's going to take of the things of the Lord Jesus and give them to us. He will recall to our minds.

He will lead us into all truth. If you don't have the truth, you've taken away the sword of the Spirit. You've taken away His voice and His means of speaking and guiding and doing His work because the two have to both be there.

There are those who have pursued the Word of God and have not understood the importance of the presence and the ministry of God the Holy Spirit and have come to an academic understanding of the Word, that knowledge that Paul talked about in Corinthians, the knowledge that puffs up, but it doesn't result in love. And if we gain knowledge of the Word of God and it may be stimulating and interesting and fascinating in a lot of ways, but if it isn't a sword in the hand of the Holy Spirit to divide us asunder to the soul and the spirit and the joints and the marrow, if it can't be used by God the Holy Spirit to lay bare the thoughts and intents of our heart, it's not going to result in love. It's not going to culminate.

It's not going to fulfill the calling that God has left for us. We need desperately the ministry of God the Holy Spirit and we desperately need the truth of the Word of God in our souls in equal parts. And those together are the strongest power on the planet.

It is greater than horses and chariots. It is greater than military might. It's greater than psychology or step programs or any other mechanism known to man because it has the power to transform the human soul.

Nothing else on earth can transform us. Nothing else can cleanse us. Nothing else can purify us.

Nothing else can prepare us for the work that God has set before us, the enabling to reflect the glory of God. Nothing can do that except the power of God through His Word and through His Spirit. So as we examine our scripture reading this morning in Proverbs, remember that not only do we need clear minds and prepared hearts by having acknowledged any sin in our lives and having claimed the promise that's contained throughout the scriptures, and we often think of 1 John 1.7 and 1 John 1.9 in this regard, that if we walk in the light as He is in the light, we have fellowship, each with the other.

And that's us with God and God with us. And the blood of Jesus Christ, His Son, cleanses us from all sin. It's not just the acknowledgment of sin.

That is an important part, and we have that a verse later in 1 John 1.9. If we acknowledge or confess our sins, He is faithful. He is just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. And that's a wonderful work of God.

But you can't have 1 John 1.9 without 1 John 1.7, because those are all present tenses. If we keep on walking in the light, just as He keeps on being in the light, we keep on having fellowship with Him, and He keeps on having fellowship with us. And it's not just a matter of confession, as sometimes that confession has been so emphasized, that the importance of walking in the light.

How do we walk in the light? Well, David tells us in the Psalms, Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path. Thy word I have hid in my heart, that I might not sin against Thee. And so, it's the combination of those two things.

So, as we examine the Word of God together this morning, we want to remember that this is fully one half of what God has provided for us by way of power and sustaining grace in this life. The Proverbs of Solomon, the son of David, king of Israel. To know wisdom and instruction.

To perceive the words of understanding. Not just to hear them, but to perceive them. This was the great failing in Israel, wasn't it? They have ears and they're constantly hearing, but they do not perceive.

It doesn't sink in. To receive the instruction of wisdom, justice, judgment, and equity. To give prudence to the simple.

To the young man, knowledge and discretion. A wise man will hear and increase learning. And a man of understanding will attain wise counsel.

To understand a proverb and an enigma. The words of the wise and their riddles. Remember when Jesus spoke to his generation only in parables? There were many occasions where he did not speak to them except in parables.

Why did he do that? Was he trying to obscure the truth? Was he trying to prevent them from understanding it? David understood, and he passed this on to Solomon, who wrote it down in the first chapter of this book. A wise man hears and increases learning. A man of understanding attains wise counsel.

So that he understands a proverb. He understands an enigma. Yet he will understand a parable.

When Jesus taught in parables, this was nourishment and wisdom for those who had already turned their hearts toward God. But for those who had not turned their hearts toward God, who didn't have an interest in the things of God, those same parables and that same spiritual meal became a condemnation. Because God prepared a table before them and they were unable to partake because of the choices they made and the priorities that they set.

And it was at the same time a wonderful provision of teaching for those who cared about

the things of God. And it was a condemnation to those. If they could not understand, it was evidence.

It brought to the surface and made an external show of the internal problem. That whitewashed tombstone full of dead men's bones, it exposed that hollowness and emptiness on the inside. The fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge.

If they didn't have the beginning of knowledge, if they weren't learning and growing and attaining unto wise counsel, what's the problem? There's no fear of the Lord. That's a symptom of the core or root problem. Fools despise wisdom and instruction.

My son, hear the instruction of your father and do not forsake the law of your mother, for they will be a graceful ornament on your head and chains about your neck. It's a wonderful introduction to this great book of wisdom. If you'll turn over a few pages to chapter 5, one of the first and most obvious obstacles in the life of a young man in particular, and these things are couched in terms of a father to his son, is the wayward path that can be followed when it comes to the opposite sex, when it comes to the point of physical maturity and the opportunity to seek for and obtain a wife.

There are many pitfalls in that path. One of the first places where a lack of attention to the things of God will manifest itself is mistakes and bad decisions in that area. We've seen this throughout our study of Genesis, going all the way back to the earliest patriarchs, where not waiting on the Lord results in bad marriage, multiple marriage, and all of the attendant consequences.

This is one of the warnings that is obtained in the very beginning chapters of Proverbs, and if you review the first six verses here of chapter 5, that's the warning here. My son, pay attention to my wisdom. Lend your ear to my understanding, so that you may preserve discretion, and your lips may keep knowledge.

For the lips of an immoral woman drip honey, and her mouth is smoother than oil. But in the end, she is bitter as wormwood, sharp as a two-edged sword. Isn't it interesting that the very same figure is used for the power of evil in one's life, as is used for the power of the word of God.

Do you want the sharp two-edged sword of the word of God at work in your life, or do you want the sharp two-edged sword of the immoral woman? Which is, of course, a figure for all of the things that can cause us to leave the path, and divert us into an unproductive and bitter life. Her feet go down to death, her steps lay hold of Sheol. Lest you ponder her path of life, her ways are unstable.

You do not know them, you can't understand them. You have no idea of how bad things are going to be if you get diverted from the path. So he says in verse 7, Therefore hear me now, my children, and do not depart from the words of my mouth.

Remove your way far from her, and do not go near the door of her house. Lest you give your honor to others, and your years to the cruel one. Lest aliens be filled with your wealth, and your labors go to the house of a foreigner.

And you mourn at last when your flesh and your body are consumed, and say, How I have hated instruction, and my heart despised correction. I have not obeyed the voice of my teachers, nor inclined my ear to those who instructed me. I was on the verge of total ruin, in the midst of the assembly and congregation.

Drink water from your own cistern, and running water from your own well. Should your fountains be dispersed abroad, streams of water in the streets? Let them be only your own, and not for strangers with you. Let your fountain be blessed, and rejoice with the wife of your youth.

As a loving dear and a graceful doe, let her breasts satisfy you at all times, and always be enraptured with her love. For why should you, my son, be enraptured by an immoral woman, and be embraced in the arms of a seductress? For the ways of man are before the eyes of the Lord, and he ponders all his paths. His own iniquities entrap the wicked man, and he is caught in the cords of his sin.

He shall die for lack of instruction, and in the greatness of his folly, he shall go astray. This particular circumstance of life, when it comes to marriage and relationship with the opposite gender, is put for all of the temporal decisions, all of the circumstances that we face as believers in this life. Are we going to heed instruction and avail ourselves of the grace and the mercy of God? It's in His truth.

It's in the ministry of His Spirit. And by heeding instruction, by paying attention to those things under the ministry of the Spirit, we can avoid an unproductive, unfruitful, and destructive way of life, which is symbolized here in the arms of the immoral woman. I would direct your attention especially to the figure that is given in verse 15.

We know the context here is this particular circumstance of going astray, not paying attention when it comes to God's institution of marriage and family that hinges upon it. He says, drink water from your own cistern and running water from your own well. Should your fountains be dispersed abroad, streams of water in the streets? Let them be only your own and not for strangers with you.

Let your fountain be blessed and rejoice with the wife of your youth. And in this case, the well and the springs of water, this of course is the source of life. This is your future.

You're not going to survive long without water. Do you want to be drinking the water that runs down the gutter of the street, that's in the common way and is accessible to everyone? Or do you want to be drinking from your well, your fountain of living water? That's the choice that we make. But this particular figure is going to be significant as we

resume our study this morning over in Genesis chapter 34.

And if you'll turn with me now back to Genesis 34, let's resume our study of the life of Jacob in this section of Genesis. Our study of Jacob is rapidly drawing to a close here. We only have about a chapter and a half left on Jacob because the book of Genesis is going to turn its attention to Joseph.

And Joseph is going to take up virtually one-third of the book. It's quite a fascinating study. I'm anxious to get there.

So let's pick up our story now. We've seen in Genesis 34 that after Jacob returns from Paddan Aram, after he leaves the house of Laban and he has all of the encounters and episodes that we've seen with wrestling with the man all night as he crosses the brook Jabbok, he comes in and stays in Sukkot for a while. He builds booths there.

We talked Friday night about the significance of the word Sukkot or booth in the Hebrew way of life and the significance that God assigned it by making a feast of booths, the feast of Sukkot. But Jacob finally enters the land at the beginning of this episode here, which is actually verse 18 of the previous chapter. Jacob came safely to the city of Shechem, which is in the land of Canaan, when he came from Paddan Aram and he pitched his tent before the city.

And he bought the parcel of land where he pitched his tent from the children of Hamor, Shechem's father, for 100 pieces of money. And he erected the altar there and called it El Elohei Yisrael. And we saw the significance of that verb.

He didn't build the altar. He erected it. He reconstructed it.

This was the altar of his grandfather Abraham built on this very spot. And Abraham paid those 100 pieces of silver to obtain that ground. This was where Abraham first worshipped God in the land.

And it's the very same spot. And so we think that he's doing well, but there's trouble brewing. And Dinah, his daughter, goes out to see and be seen among the daughters of the land.

And this, of course, is the great instinct that crops up in most teenage girls that I've ever observed. They want to see and be seen. And whether Jacob had neglected her spiritual education, he certainly was not paying attention to his duties as her father.

Because he did not make sure that she was chaperoned. He didn't pay attention to where she was going and what she was doing. She goes out unescorted and mixes with the daughters of the land.

She is seen by Shechem himself, the big cheese in the city of Shechem, the city that

bears his name. His father is the figurehead. He's the patriarch of the family.

But Shechem is really driving the train. He sees and falls in love with Dinah. And he takes her in a physical way.

And this results in great problems. As we saw last time, when Jacob hears about this and does nothing. He seems to be incapable of making a decision.

He doesn't send for his sons. He doesn't exercise his responsibilities as a father. You can think of other examples in Scripture where this also results in great death and destruction.

You think of David with his daughter Tamar. One of his sons, her half-brother, takes her in a physical way. And this is going to result in bloodshed and humiliation all the way around.

Same thing here. So, when the sons of Jacob came in from the field in verse 7 of chapter 34 of Genesis, they heard about it and they were aggrieved and very angry because he had done a disgraceful thing in Israel by lying with Jacob's daughter. A thing which ought not to be done.

Whose fault is this that this opportunity ever arose? It's Jacob's fault. Jacob has the responsibility. This is why, in a wedding ceremony, the father gives away the bride.

Who giveth this woman? And the father stands up and says, I do. Not the father and the mother. It's the father.

It's the father's umbrella of authority and responsibility for daughters. And he transfers that responsibility and authority to the husband at the point of marriage. And I cannot help but vibrate in my pew every time I attend a wedding.

And they say, who giveth this woman? And somebody stands up and says, her mother and I do. I understand that it's out of ignorance and it's all well-intentioned, but that's not the biblical model. It's the father's responsibility for the daughter.

If anything happens to that daughter, it's the father's responsibility. But Jacob is totally passive in this whole thing. And it is his fault.

And he also is going to allow his sons to rush into that vacuum of authority and do things that ought not to be done. So you will recall last time that they devise a plan. In particular, two of Dinah's full brothers.

How many full brothers does Dinah have? If you think back to the way that the family of Jacob gets assembled through Leah and Bilhah and Zilpah and finally Rachel, she has Reuben, Simeon, Levi, and now my memory is failing me. I think there are a total of six full brothers by Leah. And Judah is the one I spaced there.

Reuben, Simeon, Levi, and Judah are the first four. And then Issachar and Zebulun, I think, are the other two. So we have a total of six.

And they're all on the scene at this time. Now we might think, well, Issachar and Zebulun might be fairly young, but Reuben, Simeon, Levi, and Judah are adult sons at this point. So they are the ones who ought to be the most aggrieved and offended because this is their sister, full sister.

And sure enough, it is in particular Simeon and Levi that take the greatest offense. They are the ones who hatch this plot. So when they answer in verse 13, because Shechem has dragged his father along and said, Father, I want to get this woman as my wife.

He wants to make everything on the up and up. So they propose marriage. They say, let's go ahead and form an alliance.

Let's make a treaty together. Let's merge our two clans here. The Hamor-Shechem clan, let's merge with the Jacob clan.

Well, this is a great threat to the future of the nation of Israel and the fulfillment of the promises of God. People have talked about Genesis chapter 6 as being something that could derail the plan of God. This is a far more serious threat because if Jacob intermarries, you remember all of the cautions and all of the prohibitions that God is going to give the nation of Israel when they return to this land after the Egyptian bondage.

Do not intermarry. Do not mingle with them. They will lead you into idolatry.

They are going to defile and pollute everything that you stand for as the people of God. Well, that's the threat here. These are complete pagans.

They have no knowledge of the things of God, no interest in the things of God. They are the people of the land that God is eventually going to drive out once their iniquity is full. But here, they're proposing a merge.

Jacob doesn't say anything. He doesn't say, I'm sorry, but I have a covenant with my God and we've got to be pure and separate. The thing that you've done is wrong.

And he doesn't take this to God. He doesn't go before the Lord and say, Lord, it was my fault. It was my failure, but now justice has to be done.

My daughter has been defiled. What would you have us do? He completely forgets who he is and why he's here. He just seems to be in turmoil and completely ineffectual.

So, Simeon and Levi step up. They say in verse 14, once this marriage proposal is brought, they say, we cannot do this thing to give our sister to one who is uncircumcised. That would be a reproach to us.

But on this condition, we will consent to you. If you will become as we are, if every male of you is circumcised, then we will give our daughters to you and we will take your daughters to us. Remember, none of these men is old enough to have a daughter of marriageable age.

Dinah, their sister, is the first one to reach this age. So, when they say daughters, we will give our daughters to you and so forth. This is an alliance.

This is talking about the future. We will intermarry with you. You will intermarry with us.

We will merge. And your territory will be our territory. Our flocks will be your flocks.

We will just all join together in one big happy band. So, they seem to be agreeing to this. We will dwell with you and we will become one people.

Now, this is not a part of the plan of God. For the Shechemites, the Hamorites, how close does Hamor sound to Amor? Amorite. Hamorite.

These are the Canaanites of the land. They are not supposed to blend and merge with Israel. Certainly not unless they exhibit some faith.

You have some Canaanites who become a part of Israel and indeed are in the line of Christ. Remember who? How about Rahab, the harlot? How about Ruth, the Moabitess? But what's the difference? They are women of faith. They choose to come to the land and join themselves to it on the basis of faith.

Not on the basis of fornication and a desire to aggrandize themselves. Why does this proposal seem attractive to Shechem and Hamor? Why would they say, well sure, we'll go ahead, we'll join together. Why would they propose this? Well, we're going to find out.

Verse 17, if you will not heed us and be circumcised, then we will take our daughter and be gone. So what they're saying is, we're just going to take Dinah and go away. No recompense, no penalty for this violation, for polluting her in Israel.

Who is going to be able to marry Dinah now that she has been defiled and violated by a pagan? It would be bad enough if it had happened in Israel. There were provisions in the law of Moses. If this kind of thing took place, then they were required to get married.

But is Shechem going to leave his town and his city and his people and all of the influence that he has and join himself and become a part of Israel, kind of like Uriah the Hittite is going to do much later? No, he's not going to leave all of that. He wants to drag them into his world. And their words pleased Hamor and Shechem, Hamor's son.

They say, well, so they're agreeing to this union. All we have to do is be circumcised. And to his credit, look at verse 19.

The young man, who's the young man? Hamor's the father, Shechem's the son. Shechem is the influential one, the real effective ruler here. The young man did not delay to do the thing because he delighted in Jacob's daughter.

What does this mean? They may not have even really understood what circumcision was. It certainly wasn't practiced. How are they going to know how to do it and how to do it right? If you think about this, this is not an operation to be undertaken lightly.

You don't want to try to figure this out on your own as an amateur. They have rabbis now who are specifically trained in how to perform a circumcision on the eighth day of a child. And you have to know what you're doing.

You can wreak some harm in performing this little operation if you don't really know what you're doing. How are these Canaanites going to be initiated into the rite of circumcision? Shechem says, fine, let's do it. And he is circumcised on the spot.

The sons of Jacob circumcise him. They show him how it's done. Otherwise, they have no knowledge of circumcision in the land of Canaan.

And you'll notice that it says the young man did not delay to do the thing in 19. And then in 20, Hamor and Shechem, his son, came to the gate of their city. So even before they leave this meeting, he says, fine, let's do it.

And if you think about this, this is an act of trust. Whatever else you want to say about Shechem and his violation of their sister Dinah, when they propose that these men be circumcised, he says, okay, fine. And he walks up there, and he disrobes, and they circumcise him.

He puts himself in their power. They could easily take that knife and do something else with it. But they circumcise him on the spot.

And then he puts his clothes back on, and he and his father go back to his city and are going to make this proposal to the men. And that's important because there is deceit at work. This is a plot that the sons of Jacob have put into motion here because they want to avenge themselves.

They could just kill Shechem on the spot, so to speak. But they don't. They circumcise him, and he's going to go back.

And if the men of his city have any doubt, he can say, look, I've been circumcised. Didn't kill me. I'm doing okay.

It's a very small price to pay. This is exactly what they do. Look at verse 20.

Hamor and Shechem, his son, came to the gate of their city and spoke with the men of their city. You'll remember that the gate is the place where government transactions

took place. This was the town council.

This was the place of meeting where decisions were made, policy was set, justice was rendered, and so forth. So they're in the gate of the city, and they say, These men are at peace with us. Therefore, let them dwell in the land and trade in it, for indeed the land is large enough for them.

Let us take their daughters to us as wives, and let us give them our daughters. Only on this condition will the men consent to dwell with us and be one people, if every male among us is circumcised as they are circumcised. Some of the men might say, What do you mean circumcised? Well, you've got Shechem there.

He's sort of an object-less, and he can say, Well, here you go. This is what it is. Doesn't seem to be a big deal to me.

But why would this appeal? Why would the men be convinced? Well, to understand this fully, we need to go back and compare verse 9 with verse 21. Remember back in verse 9, Hamor spoke with them, saying, The soul of my son Shechem longs for your daughter. Give her to him as wife.

Make marriages with us. Give your daughters to us, and take our daughters to yourselves. You have lakak, the verb to take.

You have natan, the verb to give. So you've got this give and take. But who is doing the giving and taking here? Jacob will give his daughters.

Jacob will take their daughters. So who is the subject of the verb here? It's Jacob. It implies that Jacob is in control, that Jacob and his sons are in command.

You can give. Of course, giving is sort of a voluntary thing. You choose.

You control what daughters are going to go over and marry and so forth. And you take. You give your daughters.

You take our daughters. So the subject is the actor here. And Hamor is no slouch.

He didn't get to be the ruler and his son, the ruler of the city, without having some leadership qualities and some communication qualities. And he sort of implies that this is going to magnify and enhance the power of Jacob. Jacob will give.

Jacob will take. Then look at verse 10. You shall dwell with us and the land shall be before you.

Look at the things that they can do. They can do three things. They can dwell in the land.

They can trade in the land. And they can acquire possessions for themselves in the land.

He is the subject of the verb in all of these cases.

So he's going to give and take. He's going to trade and dwell and acquire possessions for himself. So this is the proposal that Hamor and Shechem make to Jacob.

Well, now they've got to go sell this same deal to their own people. This reminds you of Kissinger and some of these other people that have gone all the way back at the beginning of the century. Theodore Roosevelt, one of the things that established his reputation, even before he became president, is that he brokered agreements.

He was able to bring the Japanese to the bargaining table and solve a big problem that they had. And his negotiating skills were a part of the package that he brought to the table as a president. Well, and down through the years, we've had great negotiators.

Our current president has sent Jimmy Carter to broker peace agreements. You had the thing in Haiti, and we've had things overseas. Now you have Madeleine Albright, who is sent to try to go and be the intermediary.

And you have others that have been detailed to do this. Well, part of the art of negotiation and mediating things is presenting the package in the most favorable light to each side. And you talk to them separately.

You don't sit there and have all of them around a big table and say, well, why don't you do this? You go to them separately because you can change the language a little bit. So Jacob gets all the benefits when Hamor and Shechem are presenting it here in verse 8, 9, and 10. But now look at what they say when they're in the gate.

They say, look at verse 21. These men are at peace with us. Let them dwell in the land and trade in it.

The land is large enough for them. Let us take their daughters to us as wives. And let us give them our daughters.

Now who's the subject of give and take? It's the people of the land of Shechem and Hamor here. They're going to be doing the giving. They'll be doing the taking.

They've got this one condition. If every male among us is circumcised as they are circumcised, look at verse 23. Will not their livestock, their property, and every animal of theirs be ours? Only let us consent to them, and they will dwell with us.

Notice he doesn't say anything to the Shechemites about they will acquire property. He says they will dwell in the land. If there's plenty of land, they won't take up any room that we don't already have.

And they will trade. We can take advantage of them in business dealings. He doesn't say anything to them about that third verb back there in verse 10.

Acquire possessions. So it's all slanted to a favorable light here. We will take their daughters.

We will give our daughters. Their livestock, their property, every animal of theirs will be ours. We will acquire their possessions, Shechem and Hamor say.

Also notice there is no mention of the basic motivating factor that brings this issue up to begin with. Did Hamor and Shechem say anything about Dinah? We really need to do this so that Shechem can marry Dinah? That's not going to be a selling point for the Shechemites. So they don't even bring it up.

They're saying, look. Look at this from your perspective, what you can gain. And it goes over.

And remember back in verse 19, and I purposely skipped over this, but remember the young man did not delay to do the thing. He let the sons of Jacob circumcise him because he delighted in Jacob's daughter. And then it says he was more honorable than all the household of his father.

And you think, well, you know, this Shechem must be a pretty good guy. The Bible says he's honorable. He's the most honorable man in his father's house.

It's not quite what it says. This phrase in Hebrew is Nikbad Mikol. And you think, well, Nikbad, I don't remember hearing that word before.

Well, you have to always look for the three main consonants. And in Nikbad, you take off the N, for reasons I'll explain later, and you have K-B-D. Well, K-B-D, that's the three letters that make the word kavod.

And kavod is a word you may be familiar with. Kavod is the word for glory. The cloud of glory, the Shekinah glory, that's kavod.

Kavod means glory or weight. It's also sometimes used for someone who is large, physically large. Glory and largeness went hand in hand because a man who was very wealthy and had lots to eat would grow larger and larger.

And he was the most glorious man because he was the most prosperous man. And so kavod, at its very literal core, means the fat or the meat of something, the heaviness. And to be heavy with glory, to be heavy with riches, is all wrapped up in this word.

When you put an N in front of it, that makes it a nifal. And the nifal, kal is the active stem in Hebrew, nifal is the passive, means you receive. So you receive glory, you are assigned glory.

And nikbad mikol, kol means much, and the M in front of it means from, so much glory. The people of his land assigned him the glory. He was the most influential man.

He was the most powerful man. He was the most glorious man in his father's household. He's the man who drives the train.

He's the big cheese. So when he gets circumcised and he's the most influential man, it doesn't mean honor in the sense of integrity. It means he's the most honored by his people.

He's the revered one. He's the leader. What he does, the other people will follow.

And so when he goes back and presents this, he's like Genghis Khan or Hannibal or some other person who's the big cheese. And if he proposes something and pushes it and has it done to himself, well, that's going to carry the day. And, of course, that's exactly what happens.

So in verse 24, All who went out of the gate of his city, heeded Hamor and Shechem his son. And when it says all who went out of the gate, this is a technical phrase in the ancient Near East. Someone who goes out the gate, this is someone of fighting age.

These are the virile men. These are the men who can go out to fight. To go out and to come in are terms that evoke military operations.

And if you can go out the gate, it means you're old enough to fight and you're young enough to fight, if you get my meaning. You're not too young and you're not too old. These are all the men of fighting age.

The militia or the ones that would be called to arms for defending the area there. So all who came out the gate, heeded Hamor and Shechem his son. Every male was circumcised.

All who went out of the gate of his city. You'll notice that this is emphasized at the beginning and end of the verse. These are all of the national guardsmen here.

They're not going to maintain a full-time standing army because they're just a small community, relatively speaking. But if there was a need for defense, these are all the guys who can grab a sword and a spear and a shield and come to the aid and defense of the area in a military way. So they do this and they fall for this.

Now look at verse 25. It came to pass on the third day when they were in pain. You remember Shechem got circumcised and he went back pretty much that same day and said, you know, here's this circumcision deal.

It's not too bad. Well, it gets bad two or three days later. And if you've had any kind of a wound or a surgery, it's not right after the fact.

Your body hasn't really had time to react. In these days, it was not uncommon to get a little infection going there. And the discomfort from this is going to hit on the third day.

And this, of course, the Israelites know this. The sons of Jacob, they know this. They've all seen when little babies.

And you can imagine babies squall and cry enough for other reasons. But when all the baby boys are getting circumcised on the eighth day, well, long about the eleventh day, these little babies are inconsolably in pain. And there can be a little bit of infection going there and the need for dressings and whatnot.

Well, these men, you know, they saw Shechem and thought, well, that can't be so bad. He's not in bad shape. He made the trip from the tents of Jacob back here to town, and he seems to be doing okay.

Well, you know, three days later, they're all pretty well laid up and incapacitated. And you will notice that two of the sons of Jacob, Simeon and Levi, Dinah's brothers, Reuben and Judah and Issachar and Zebulun, don't do this. It's just the two.

They're the ones who are incensed. They're the ones who are angry. They're the ones who hatched this plot.

And amazingly, out of all of the men that are part of Shechem and Hamor's conclave there, two guys can go in there, probably with their servants and their right-hand men. These are all men who have a staff, so to speak. They've got a little militia of their own.

And they go down there, Simeon and Levi, and it says, each took his sword and came boldly upon the city and killed all the males. This language here, when it says they came upon, the word for to come forth here is the word *bo*. And *bo* is not normally used with the preposition *al*, A-L, to come upon.

When it's used, this has the idea of surprise. To come upon someone is to come upon them suddenly. Usually they come forth, or they go forth to fight, or they come out.

And you have other prepositions that are used. But come upon is fairly rare, and when it is used, it's a surprise. It's unexpected.

And that's what takes place here. They come upon the men of the city boldly. This word for boldly is from the Hebrew word *batakh*.

B-A-T-A-C-H. *Batakh* is the Hebrew verb that means to trust. It's used of God.

I will trust in God. God is the one in whom I place my faith. And when it says they came forth, they trusted in the fact that there would be no resistance.

And they were bold. They were confident. They knew how things were going to be.

And they came upon them suddenly, surprised them in a state of weakness, and there's a great catastrophic killing of all the males. Well, what is the significance of all of this?

We're going to pause and take our break. When we come back, we're going to think about how this fits into the larger story of Jacob, what the result of all this is.

Is this justified? Is this something that's pleasing in God's eyes? We'll come back and find out.